

REMARKS

Claims 1-38 are pending. Claims 1-38 were rejected by the Examiner in the Office Action dated June 23, 2008. Reconsideration of all rejected claims is requested in light of the arguments and amendments presented here.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 1-38 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over E.P. Patent No. 0738991 A2 to Quest et al. ("Quest") in view of U.S. Patent Publication No. 2002/0138594 to Rowe ("Rowe").

Claim 1 as previously amended recites, "a master gaming controller adapted to control game play and authorize payouts and other awards on said gaming machine," and "a universal gaming engine, said universal gaming engine having at least one dedicated processing unit, at least one associated storage device and a second universal communication interface, wherein said dedicated processing unit is separate and distinct from said master gaming controller." No such dedicated processing unit and separate and distinct master gaming controller are shown by the cited portions of the references. In particular, the Office action appeared to acknowledge that Quest fails to teach the master gaming controller of claim 1. The rejection appears to be based on considering microprocessor unit 23 of Quest to be a universal gaming engine (and thus not a master gaming controller). Rowe was cited instead as showing a master gaming controller.

The Office action indicated that it would be obvious to modify Quest according to Rowe (paragraphs 0035-0039) to allow a server to update and change the software on one or more gaming machines to enable fast, easy and cost-efficient changing of applications in the gaming machines. However, even if the machine of Quest were modified in this way, such a machine would not have all the elements of claim 1. Specifically, if the apparatus of Quest were connected to gaming terminal data repository (GTDR) 100 of Rowe (assumed to be considered as the "server" referred to in the Office action), there is no indication in the cited portion of Rowe that GTDR 100 would act as the master gaming controller of claim 1. In particular, claim 1 recites that the master gaming controller is "adapted to control game play and authorize payouts and other awards on said gaming machine." However, no disclosure of controlling game play or authorizing payouts by GTDR 100 was found in the cited text, which appears to be directed to downloading of software by GTDR 100 to gaming terminals.

Quest appears to maintain software in programme card 24. “The control system comprises a microprocessor unit 23 to which is connected a plug-in programme card 24 containing control data specific to the particular game to be played with the machine.” Column 6, lines 5-9. Such software is updated by replacing programme the card. “When it is required to change the game it is only necessary to remove the modules, replace these with new modules and put in a new program card.” Column 6, lines 32-34. Even if Quest was modified so that software updating was performed from GTDR 100 of Rowe, it is not seen how this would provide a separate and distinct master gaming controller and a universal gaming engine. Therefore, clarification is requested. In particular, it is requested that particular features of the references be identified as corresponding to each individual claim feature.

Independent claims 23 and 33 recite the language of claim 1 discussed above (“wherein said dedicated processing unit is separate and distinct from said master gaming controller”). Claims 23 and 33 are therefore submitted to be allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 1.

Claim 23 is amended to correct an informality. Claim 23 recites, “at least one computer server, said at least one computer server having a program adapted to provide data regarding individual universal gaming machine engines, major components of gaming machines, or both; and

a plurality of gaming machines in communication with said at least one computer server, wherein at least one first gaming machine of said plurality of gaming machines comprises: a master gaming controller adapted to control game play and authorize payouts and other awards on said gaming machine.”

To the extent that it is understood, the rejection of claim 1 appears to be based on considering GTDR 100 as both the at least one computer server and the master gaming controller. However, there are “a plurality of gaming machines in communication with said at least one computer server, wherein at least one first gaming machine of said plurality of gaming machines comprises: a master gaming controller...” Thus, considering GTDR 100 to be both of these components is contrary to the claim language. It is requested that all of the features of claim 23 be identified in the references, or that the rejection be withdrawn.

All dependent claims depend from one of claim 1, 23, or 33 and are submitted to be allowable at least for depending from an allowable base claim. Furthermore, the dependent claims contain additional features that are not shown by the references as cited.

For example, claim 4 recites, “said removable and interchangeable major component and said universal gaming engine are adapted to detach from said gaming machine as a combined unit.” The Office action indicated that if the machine were taken apart, both components could be taken out together. However, this is different from detaching as a combined unit. While Quest discloses detaching certain components, there is no disclosure of detaching microprocessor unit 23, and in particular no disclosure of detaching it with another module as a combined unit.

Claim 6 recites, “said removable and interchangeable major component comprises a top box.” The Office action pointed to the specification as lacking a precise definition for “top box.” However, the term “top box” has an ordinary meaning to one of skill in the art and it is submitted that modules 5 and 7 of Quest (assumed to be the corresponding features of Quest) do not fall within such an ordinary meaning of the term.

Claim 8 recites, “a main cabinet.” It is not clear what feature of Quest is considered as a main cabinet. Clarification is requested.

While the undersigned has attempted to fully understand, and respond to, the Office action, in some cases the correspondence between claim elements and reference features has not been explicitly stated and only a general indication of a portion of text is provided. It is requested that any further rejection specifically identify reference features corresponding to each claim element.

Information Disclosure Statement

A Supplemental Information Disclosure Statement is being filed herewith. It is respectfully requested that this Supplemental Information Disclosure Statement be considered and the PTO Form 1449 be initialed and returned with the next Action.

CONCLUSION

Accordingly, it is believed that this application is now in condition for allowance and an early indication of its allowance is solicited. However, if the Examiner has any further matters that need to be resolved, a telephone call to the undersigned at 510-663-1100 would be appreciated.

Respectfully submitted,
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